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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to see if cross-age tutoring by high schoolers would have an effect on the students' understanding and ability to write a short story. High schoolers, in an elective creative writing course, were paired up with sixth graders from a local feeder elementary. The high schoolers spent time studying specific short story elements and then commenting on drafts of the sixth graders' stories. The results of this study showed an average increase in students' scores of 15% on a test of basic short story elements. This indicated that the students had an increased understanding of the elements covered in the tutoring experience. Also, through the evaluation of the high schooler's own stories, the students demonstrated an ability to use the skills they had learned in their own writing. Thus, this cross-age tutoring experience that focused on story writing skills was an effective method for teaching specific short story elements to high school students. Contains 13 references, and 10 tables and 4 figures of data. Appendixes contain an open-ended survey; a test of short story elements, two short stories; guidelines for individual short stories; advice on introducing tutoring partners; biography sheets; and a short story planning guide. (Author/RS)

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ED 459 477

# THE EFFECT OF CROSS-AGE TUTORING BY HIGH SCHOOLERS ON THEIR UNDERSTANDING AND ABILITY TO CREATE A SHORT STORY.

**Denise Ankcorn**

**WHITWORTH COLLEGE**

**Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of**

**Masters in Teaching**

**Whitworth College**

**Spokane, Washington**

**July, 1999**

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by

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Master in Teaching

School of Education

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**Approved by:**

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Finally, I would like to dedicate this project in loving memory of Grace Stanton.

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## ABSTRACT

With pressure from the Washington State legislature and the public to improve the quality of students emerging from the public school system teachers are searching for effective methods to accomplish the first goal of the Washington State Essential Learnings. This goal states that students need to "read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings" (Commission on Student Learning, 1997). Two tools that teachers have found of use in the accomplishment of this goal are having students write creatively and to use tutors in the classroom. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to see if cross-age tutoring by high schoolers would have an effect on the students' understanding and ability to write a short story.

High schoolers, in an elective creative writing course, were paired up with sixth graders from a local feeder elementary. After an initial planning meeting at the high school, where the foundation was laid for the sixth graders' stories. The high schoolers spent time studying specific short story elements and then commenting on drafts of the sixth graders' stories.

The results of this study showed an average increase in students' scores of 15% on a test of basic short story elements. This indicated that the students had an increased understanding of the elements covered in the tutoring experience. Also, through the evaluation of the high schooler's own stories, the students demonstrated an ability to use the skills they had learned in their own writing. Thus, this cross-age tutoring experience that focused on story writing skills was an effective method for teaching specific short story elements to high school students.

# INTRODUCTION

In 1993, the Washington State legislature passed the Education Reform Act responsible for revolutionizing the education system of this state. This act is a demand for the raising of academic standards for students in the Washington Education system. The foundation for this reform is a series of goals set out by the Act defining what students should know and be able to do to function well in society. The first of these goals states that students should be able to "read with comprehension, write with skill, and communicate effectively and responsibly in a variety of ways and settings" (Commission on Student Learning, 1997). Students will be required to think instead of just respond. No longer will a student just have to write the answer to 2+2, but they will have to explain how they came up with that answer, a skill that requires higher level thinking. Thus, one of the biggest parts of this goal is making sure that students are able to write and communicate effectively. A method that teachers have found to tackle this first goal is teaching students to write creatively.

Creative writing is not just about using imagination to put words down on paper; it is an art form, with the emphasis on form. For instance, Tompkins (1982) has defined seven reasons why people should write creatively: 1) to entertain; 2) to foster artistic expression; 3) to explore the function and values of writing; 4) to stimulate the imagination; 5) to clarify thinking; 6) to search for identity; and 7) to learn to read and write (p.718-721). In a creative writing class a teacher is not only trying to foster a sense of imagination but also to teach the students about the forms that they are writing. Basically, a creative writing course is a backward approach to understanding the elements of the forms of literature that students read. For example, before a student can effectively write a short story they need to understand what goes into the form of a

short story. Therefore, through the writing of a short story the student will not only be able to use her imagination but she is also gaining a greater understanding of the forms of literature.

Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to investigate the influence of cross-age tutoring on high school students' understanding and ability to write a short story. The method for teaching story elements was to pair up the secondary students with sixth grade students at a local elementary school in a cross-age tutoring relationship. The secondary students acted as individual tutors and advisors for the sixth graders in the process of writing a story. The elements of short story that the secondary students tutored on and were tested for an increase in understanding of were: characterization; plot development; word choice; and grammar conventions. The two-fold results of this study were, the creation of a story by the sixth graders with the help of their high school tutors and an increased understanding of the elements and the process that goes into building a short story by the high school students.

While the focus of this study is the development and understanding of the elements of short story, two other issues that will be noted and discussed are:

1. The positive and negative effects of creating a relationship between grade levels.
2. The benefits and struggles of collaboration.

Review of Related Literature

If a person walked into a one-room schoolhouse he would expect to encounter a variety of students of all different ages learning together. In a room full of different age levels, a person could also reasonably expect that the students would have a wide range of abilities in accordance with the variety of ages. This person then may wonder how a teacher is able to reach all of these students with different academic abilities at the same time. This is why the concept of tutoring is not an idea that has newly emerged. "It was a practice that arose out of the one-room school houses of the past where students of all ages assisted each other in their studies" (Losch, 1981, p.4). Tutoring was a way for the teacher to facilitate learning for all the students. In the days of the one-room schoolhouse the teachers expected a variety of skill levels because of the combination of ages, and they used this multiplicity as a resource in their teaching.

As the years have passed and classrooms have transitioned from multi-age to one-age classrooms, surprisingly some things have stayed the same. One of these surprises is that in the change to the same age classroom, the existence of multiple ability levels in a classroom did not disappear. Researchers have found that even though all the students in a classroom are the same age, "student ability levels vary significantly within any regular classroom" (Losch, 1981, p. 4). Therefore, the age of the student does not necessarily determine the skill level of the student and the classroom as a whole. Now the same-age classroom has a different set of problems; a teacher has a class full of students at different ability levels and no older students to assist in tutoring. This makes "being accountable for each student a logistical challenge for the teachers in their effort to meet each students needs" (Losch, 1981, p.4). With this variety of skill levels in the same-age classroom, teachers are now faced with an ethical dilemma: how do they reach all of their students at the same time?

With the realization of the logistical problem and increased pressure to make sure that students are succeeding through state tests such as the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, "there is now a growing movement in education toward the utilization of students as teachers of other students" (Gibbs, 1982, p.2). Teachers are once again creating and looking for opportunities for peer and cross-age tutoring, tapping this once commonly used resource. Teachers have found that in their classrooms, where resources are often scarce and students are at a variety of skill levels, tutoring has become a readily accessible method for teachers to provide one-to-one attention to students in need (Bohning, 1982, p.274). Teachers have found that they once again need the resource of tutors in the classroom.

There are two basic kinds of tutoring that are used in the typical classroom environment - peer and cross-age tutoring. Peer tutoring is a tutoring situation in which the tutor and learner are classmates or in the same grade (Gibbs, 1982, p. 5). Cross-age tutoring is similar to peer tutoring where students are helping other students, however, the tutors in the cross-age tutoring situation are more advanced students, typically two or more years older than the tutee (Gibbs, 1982, p. 5).

Both these systems of tutoring have their assets, but there are reasons why teachers lost interest in using tutoring in the same-age classroom. For instance, one of the major problems with the peer tutoring system is the tutee tends to resist being tutored by a classmate. This is because in a peer tutoring relationship, peers are put in a situation where one is often "labeled as less capable" than their tutor (Gaustad, 1993, p.3). In the cross-age tutoring situation the main difficulty is logistics. Cross-age tutoring worked well when it was readily available and the students were all in the same room, but now that students are separated by age the opportunities for cross-age tutoring require a significant amount of preparation, collaboration, and most of all, organization.

However, researchers have pointed out and reaffirmed the value behind the effort of organizing a classroom open to tutoring (especially cross-age). Research indicates tutoring is a valuable reciprocal experience for both partners on both the social and academic levels. According to Bohning (1982), "planned peer and cross-age tutoring can add measurably to the academic and social growth of the individual participants" (p.274). Consequently, tutoring may be worth the extra effort that it takes to implement and organize.

Researchers have found that a tutoring relationship can result in the social growth of both students. First, a successful tutoring relationship is dependent upon one student being able to work with another student to achieve an objective. Thus, the tutoring environment can help equip students "with the skills necessary to meet the challenges of working with others in different capacities" (Hickey & DeCoste, 1998, p. 75). In addition, tutoring relationships can be valuable in increasing the self esteem of the students because peer resource programs "satisfy our four basic human psychological needs to belong and love, to gain power, to be free, and to have fun" (Glasser, 1986). Therefore, a tutoring relationship gives the students opportunities to work on both group and psychological skills.

As mentioned, the other major asset of a tutoring relationship is the academic gains that can be achieved by both tutor and tutee. The academic gains for the tutee are obvious, in the tutoring relationship the student in need receives additional one-on-one help for the acquisition of a skill. For the tutor, the academic gains are sometimes not as apparent, although "current research on cross-age tutoring indicates that the academic skills of the tutors improve as much or more than the skills of the tutored" (Nevi, 1983, p. 892). Some of the reasons for this increase in the skills of the tutor are a "shift in the locus of control" (Nevi, 1983, p.894), the tutor taking on

the attitudes and demeanor of a teacher, and metacognitive gains for the student (Hahn & Smith, 1983, p.331).

A shift in the "locus of control" over knowledge occurs in the tutoring relationship because the student assumes the role of a teacher. It has been observed that as the student takes on the role of teacher, "the tutor assumes a teacher's characteristics. These may include prestige, authority, and feeling of competence" (Nevi, 1983, p.893). The shift in control and the change in identity from learner to teacher often results in an increased ownership of knowledge for the tutor, because the tutor is now responsible for communicating knowledge to their learner. Thus, a tutor develops "a greater respect for knowledge because it is significant, useful, and a medium of exchange" (Nevi, 1983, p. 896). Students who tutor improve academically because they are empowered to learn through the shift in power. In a tutoring situation, the tutor feels that they have power over the knowledge instead of the knowledge having power over him or her.

As the student takes on the new role of teacher/tutor he also learns about the difficulties of being a teacher, such as communication and the expectation of teacher to be an expert in their subject matter. Tutors find that one of the first steps in being a good teacher is to be a good learner. "Tutoring affords the tutor more opportunities to study the subject" (Nevi, 1983, p. 896). The tutors come to realize that most teachers do not automatically know everything, although they often appear that way, good teachers are constantly relearning or learning more about their subject. Also, tutoring and teaching "gives exposure to skills and understanding that may no longer be a part of tutors' normal curriculum of experience" (Nevi, 1983, p. 897). When a person teaches something to someone else they are giving it away instead of just receiving the knowledge, this requires the teacher to look at the subject in a different manner.

Lastly, one of the major reasons why researchers have observed academic gains in the tutor is that cross-age tutoring enables students to think about their own thinking. "Cross-age tutoring could induce the subject-tutor to bring into focus metacognitive knowledge about a cognitive task demand" (Hahn & Smith, 1983, p. 331). The tutor has to think about how he is going to distribute information to the learner, and "tutors become self-conscience about their strategies and objectives" as they assume the role of teacher (Flavell, 1976, p.235). By thinking about their own thinking, tutors develop a different understanding of how it is to learn something.

Several studies have been done that help examine the roles and benefits of tutoring. For instance, Gibbs (1983) did an examination of the benefits of learning in tutoring and found four studies that illustrated increases in the reading skills of the tutees. The first example was of a successful cross-age tutoring relationship that raised the reading scores of elementary students in an average of six months. The second example was of a successful tutoring experience with learning-disabled students. At Soto Street School in Los Angeles, tutoring was also found to be responsible for the growth in reading skills over a six-year period. The last cited successful program in the Gibbs study was of an increase in scores on the Slosson Oral Reading Test, when students were peer tutored instead of tutored by adults.

Another researcher, Rekrut (1992), looked at this issue from a different angle and did a study on the benefits of the cross-age tutoring relationship for the tutor. In her study she found that "students who had been taught the story structure and its use as a recall apparatus and then tutored elementary students in the strategy did better on the test of story knowledge than did students who had been taught the story structure as a recall device but did not teach it" (Rekrut, 1992, p. 6). This study illustrated the academic gains of the tutor in the tutoring relationship.

The value of tutoring in the classroom has been shown, however, the question remains as to the benefit of the tutoring relationship on the tutors' writing and acquisition of creative writing skills. One of the ways that tutoring can be used in the creative writing class is to create and establish an audience for the learner. The need for an audience is one of the things that Calkins (1986) discussed as one of the keys to making people successful writers. Calkins states, "As writers, what we all need more than anything else in the world is listeners, listeners who will respond with silent empathy, with signs of recognition, with laughter and tears and questions and stories of their own. Writers need to be heard" (p.14-15). A tutoring program provides that ready-made audience for the writer.

There are several functions that the tutor could assist with in writing a story that the teacher often does in a writing class. Methods for this approach were observed in a research project conducted by Bright (1995) that focused on one teacher of writing, Norman Pite. Pite sees his role in the writing classroom as being a "reaction to needs" in the writer. For instance, one of the ways that Pite believes he fulfills the needs of his writers is by asking them to tell him about their writing, acting as a "backboard sending the ball back into the student's court" (Calkins, 1986, p. 119). In a tutoring relationship, the tutors are the sounding boards for their tutees as they work out problems in their writing, which results in an individualized writing and learning experience for the tutee. The tutors from the creative writing class would also be an example for younger students of an older creative writer, a person who likes creative writing who chose to be in a creative writing class. Finally the tutors could serve as a personal editor and help with the publication of their work.

As discussed, the role of a tutor is to be there for his or her learner to provide one-on-one help and support for the tutee. Through the examination of literature it has been found that

tutoring can lead to an increase in both social and academic skills, for both the tutor and the tutee, that can be of use in all classrooms - even the creative writing classroom.

Research Expectations

Based on literature presented and experience in the classroom, the researcher believes that cross-age tutoring by secondary students will result in an increase in the understanding and knowledge of how to apply the elements of short story.

## METHOD

Research Setting

The Mead school district is a small school district that serves the community to the north of Spokane, Washington. The Mead area and school district have a strong tradition of supporting education and learning. The district is situated in a fairly rural area and draws from upper-middle class neighborhoods with low amounts of ethnic diversity. Both of the schools involved in this study, Mt. Spokane High School (MSHS)and Colbert Elementary, come from this district.

Mt. Spokane High School is one of the two high schools in the Mead school district. It is located in the middle of the Peone Prairie near the base of Mt. Spokane. The 1998-1999 school year was the second year of operation at MSHS. With the addition of the new high school to the district, it was decided that the high schools would now serve students in grades 9-12, instead of 10-12. To make the transition from a one to two high school system easier, all of the seniors from last year stayed at the old high school. Therefore, this was the first year that MSHS has had its own senior class. With this in mind, this year has been a year for building new traditions and school pride. The enrollment at MSHS was 1250 students during the 1998-1999 school year, 5% of the students are persons of color, 46% of the population are female, 54% male, and 21% of the students qualify for free and reduced lunch. The school also places a high value on giving teachers time to collaborate - twice a week on block days, there is a collaborative prep time from 7:30a.m. - 8:00a.m. Fifty-five classroom teachers are employed by the school, with forty-seven of the teachers having a master degree or better. Two of the main goals of MSHS are to adapt curriculum to coincide with the criteria of the essential academic learning requirements (EALR) and to build a productive working relationship with feeder elementary and middle schools.

The school day is set up on a modified block schedule where classes meet four times a week, including once a week for 90 minutes. The English curriculum has a combination of required and elective courses. For the first two years all 9th and 10th graders have to take the required 9th and 10th grade English classes, but they may also choose to take an additional English elective if their schedule allows. For the 11th and 12th grade years, the students are required to select for each semester one of the many English electives offered, which included creative writing.

One of MSHS's feeder elementary schools is Colbert Elementary. Colbert Elementary was built in the 1960s and in 1993 was extensively remodeled in order to serve more students. It is the largest elementary in Eastern Washington with a student population of 685 children in kindergarten through sixth grade, 3% of those students are students of color. Eighteen percent of the students attending Colbert are eligible for the free and reduced lunch and breakfast programs.

The four teachers involved in this study were: Lori Ziegler and Denise Ankcorn from Mt. Spokane; and Connie Hampton and Don Hartvigson from Colbert. Denise Ankcorn was a Master in Teaching (MIT) student at Whitworth college; her undergraduate degree was in English and Comparative History of Ideas from the University of Washington. This study was linked to her belief in providing authentic learning experiences in the classroom and having a learner centered classroom where students become advocates for their own learning.

Lori Ziegler has taught in the Mead school district for the past six years, and has endorsements in English and Social Studies. She was one of the original faculty at MSHS and she is currently serving as the head of the English Department. She believes that "all students are capable of writing creatively; it is not just the domain of the gifted. Creative writing can be

used as a vehicle for at-risk students to open up to new ideas and develop a more positive attitude toward learning."

Connie Hampton was also pursuing a master degree from Whitworth college in the MIT program. Her undergraduate degree was in Microbiology from the University of Washington. Dan Hartvigsen has been teaching sixth grade at Colbert for five years, and he is a former graduate of the MIT program.

Subjects

The high school student participants of this study all come from the Spring creative writing English elective course. These students were chosen for this study because of their interest in creative writing, through the selection of this elective. There were sixteen males and twelve females in the class. Twenty-two of these students were in their last year of high school. All members of the class participated in the tutoring portion of the study. A few creative writing club members participated because more students were needed to pair up with the elementary students, but they were not included in the data collection.

Instruments

The first instrument, an open-ended survey, was used at the beginning and the end of the study. The survey focused on how the students felt about their ability to understand and use the creative writing elements of character, plot, word choice and conventions. In addition, this survey assessed the students' attitudes about the tutoring experience and the subject of creative writing. (Appendix A)

The second instrument was a test of story elements (Appendix B) where the students were asked to identify the short story elements of characters, setting and plot sequence in the stories, "Shaving"(Appendix D), by Leslie Norris, and "The Cask of the Amontillado"(Appendix

C), by Edgar Allen Poe. Both of these works were chosen from a selection of short stories in the freshman anthology of literature, *Appreciating Literature*, used at MSHS and in the Mead School District. "The Cask of the Amontillado" was also chosen for its readability. For instance, it scored an 80.12% on the Flesch Reading Ease scale, a grade level of 4.34 on the Flesch Kincaid scale, a 6.34 on the Coleman-Liau grade level scale and an 8.20 on the Bormuth Grade Level scale. Therefore this text was appropriate for this age level of students. This text was also chosen for its complex characters, distinctive setting and intriguing plot line. "Shaving" was also determined to be appropriate for this study through the calculation of the same readability statistics. "Shaving" scored 81.83% on the Flesch Reading Ease, a grade level of 4.64 on the Flesch Kincaid Grade Level, a 7.61 on the Coleman-Liau Grade scale, and an 8.20 on the Bormuth grade level. "Shaving" was also selected for this study because it is a story that is completely different in subject matter than "Cask of the Amontillado" but has the same strength of three dimensional characterization, distinctive setting, and a plot line that draws the reader into the story. The actual short story test was a modified version of a test also in the *Appreciating Literature* text (Appendix B).

The last instrument used in this project were short stories written by the creative writing students. At the end of the short story writing project all of the high schoolers were required to write their own short story. The guidelines, which were provided three weeks before the assignment was due, for the writing of their story were two rubrics on characterization and plot that the high schoolers developed to assist with the tutoring and critiquing of the sixth grade stories (Appendix E).

Procedures

The objective of this study was to see the effect on understanding and acquisition of creative writing elements in the high school students through cross-age tutoring. Before the tutoring relationship and training began, all of the students completed the open-ended survey and skills test of story elements on the story "Shaving." The use of these initial instruments served as a base to measure improvement.

The first contact of the tutors and tutees was through the exchange of biographical information sheets (Appendix F) that focused on students' interests completed by each of the students. Connie Hampton, Colbert Elementary, and Denise Ankcorn, MSHS, then met to pair up the students according to interests and their knowledge of the individual students' social and ability levels.

After biographical information was exchanged, the students from both levels came together for a team building and story building session at Mt. Spokane. During this session, the high school students and the elementary students had a chance to meet their partners and other students by playing an ice breaking activity titled Introduce Your Partner (Appendix G). After the students became more comfortable with each other, a local author Chris Crutcher read from his young adult novel Staying Fat for Sarah Byrnes and talked to the students about where he obtains ideas for characters and how to get a story published. The last objective of the day was the completion of a story-planning guide by the elementary student with the help of the high school student. The story-planning guide was based upon a narrative plan from the First Steps writing series and asks for brief descriptions of characters, setting and the basics of the plot (Appendix H). The story-planning guide served as the foundation for the sixth graders' stories.

One week later, the Colbert students sent the first draft of their story to the high school students for evaluation and tutoring. In this first exchange, the tutors focused on drawing out and expanding upon the setting and the characters in the story. In the next exchange of revisions the focus was on plot development, and the tutor commented on the basic elements of the plot in the story. For example, the high school student looked to see if the story had an adequate narrative hook, a beginning that set up the story, a middle with a conflict and climax, and an end where there was a resolution of the conflict. The final exchange of the drafts paid attention to word choice, where the tutor focused on identifying and suggesting alternative words and adjectives. After the last exchange of the stories the experience was followed by the post-test of story elements on the story "The Cask of the Amontillado" and an open-ended survey.

Also, during the exchange of revisions and the building of the story by the sixth graders, the high school students were in tutor training about all the elements of short story covered in the tutoring relationship. At the completion of the training session on characterization and plot the creative writing students developed corresponding rubrics. These rubrics were used to develop a common language to respond to the sixth graders' stories. The rubrics were also used later on in the grading of the story written by the high school student. In addition, class time was spent on how to properly respond and suggest ideas to their tutees, which took place before they received any portion of the sixth graders' stories. Before any story that was commented on was sent back to the sixth grader, the instructor did a sensitivity check on the comments to make sure that they were appropriate. Finally, during the tutoring experience the students in the creative class were required to write their own short stories based on the criteria they developed for characters and plot that were due at the end of the unit. This final assessment enabled high school students to apply what they had learned and observed in the sixth grade stories to their own writing.

## RESULTS

This study tested students' ability to understand and create a short story with well-rounded characters and a developed plot. The creative writing students' understanding of the short story elements of plot and characterization were measured mainly through evaluation of two of the instruments, the test of short story elements and the pre- and post-survey. The ability of the students to acquire and use their knowledge of the elements of a short story was measured through the scoring of the students' short story according to a class-developed rubric on plot and characterization. Two additional areas that will be noted in this section are the positive and negative aspects of bringing two age groups together and the benefits and struggles of collaboration; data in this area was collected through both a survey and instructor participation and observation.

### *Data Analysis*

#### *Pre- and post-test of short story elements*

Sixteen creative writing students took a short story element test of basic skills modified from the tenth grade *Appreciating Literature* text used at MSHS (Table 1). The researcher evaluated the tests, and each question was scored according to a three-point scale. The scores from these tests were then entered into a spreadsheet in order to determine descriptive statistics. The mean, standard deviation and range were calculated for each question and the total score from this data. Besides examining the total scores the scores were also evaluated in two separate categories. The first category, questions 1-5, focused primarily on aspects of plot development. The second category, question six, addressed the students' understanding of the main character in the story. In addition, there were three remaining questions on the short answer test that focused on the theme and the setting of the story. Although these are an important part of the

overall understanding of the story they were not areas directly addressed by this study, thus not examined beyond the total score.

***Table 1: Questions asked in the short story elements test of basic skills.***

| |
|---|
| 1. What is the exposition? |
| 2. What event is the narrative hook? |
| 3. What complications form the rising action? |
| 4. What event is the climax? |
| 5. Does the resolution logically follow the conflict and climax? |
| 6. What does the author directly tell about the characters? What does the author indirectly show through their words and actions? |
| 7. What details are used to describe the setting? What atmosphere is created by these details? |
| 8. Is the theme, or central idea, directly stated? If the theme is not directly stated, what theme is implied by the story's other elements? |
| 9. Identify what you believe to be the theme of the story. |

(*Appreciating Literature*, p. 175)

*Survey*

The pre-survey examined a student's opinion of writing, understanding of the short story elements and feelings about working with the sixth graders in a tutoring partnership, seventeen of the students answered this survey. The post-survey, which asked the same questions, was taken by 23 of the students. The written responses from these surveys were coded, categorized and recorded.

*Short story*

Both as part of this study and as a requirement for this class, each student wrote his or her own short story that was due at the end of the study. These short stories were also evaluated by the instructor for the students' ability to create a well-developed plot and three-dimensional characters in their own story. The short stories were evaluated according to two five-point student-developed rubrics that focused on characters (Table 2) and plot (Table 3). These scores were also entered into a spreadsheet for descriptive analysis.

***Table 2: Student-developed character rubric used in evaluation of short stories by researcher***

Character Rubric

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 points | Character is shown instead of told. Character is 3-dimensional and life-like. Character has motivation, problems and goals that are well developed. Has specific detail such as an appropriate name. |
| 3 points | We are mostly told about the character instead of shown who the characters are. Motivation, problems and goals of the characters need more development. Few specific details about the character. |
| 1 point | Characters are not clearly defined. No personality to the character, not life-like. Hardly any details about the character or the details are inconsistent. Character is inconsistent and does not make sense. |

***Table 3: Student-developed plot rubric used in evaluation of short stories by researcher***

Plot Rubric

| | |
|---|---|
| 5 points | The story is original and has a visible problem. Exposition of the story reveals the characters, setting and problem. Rising action prepares you for the climax by providing additional information and conflicts concerning the problem. The climax of the story is greatest moment of emotional intensity. The resolution gives the reader a solution to the problem. |
| 3 points | The problem of the story is unclear. The exposition of the story does not set up the story effectively. Resolution does not resolve the problem. |
| 1 point | No identifiable problem in the story which results in no plot in the story. The reader also does not learn about the characters and the setting. |

Results

*Understanding*

For the first five questions, which focused on plot development, the average score for the class was 59%. For the second, post-study test, the average for the first five questions was 75%, which is an increase in scores of 16% (Table 4).

***Table 4: Average scores for the post- and pre-test questions 1-5.***

| | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Questions 1-5 | 59% | 75% | +16% |

In addition, all but four of the students' personal scores increased from the pre- to the post-test in questions 1-5 (Figure 1). Therefore, a majority of the students illustrated an increase in their understanding of plot development from the pre-test to the post-test.

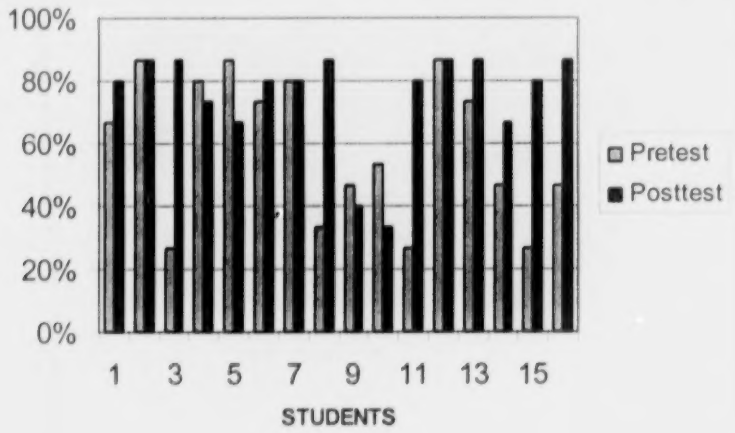


***Figure 1: Percentile scores for questions 1-5 pre- and post-tests.***

The standard deviation between the two classes also shifted from 23% in the pre-test to 16% in the post-test a decrease in 7%. This coincides with the decrease in range of 7% from 60% to 53%. This means that the students' scores not only increased in value overall but the scores also became more similar from the pre- to the post-test.

***Table 5: Standard deviation and range for questions 1-5 pre- and post-test.***

| | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Standard Deviation | 23% | 16% | -7% |
| Range | 60% | 53% | -7% |

Question number six pertained specifically to the understanding of characterization in a story. For this question there was a similar increase in the average score from the pre-test to the post-test. In the pre-test, the class average on question number six was 63%. The average for the post-test was 77%, an increase in scores of 14% (Table 6).

***Table 6: Average scores for the post- and pre-test for question 6.***

| | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Question 6 | 63% | 77% | +14% |

The individual increase in the students' scores is illustrated in Figure 2, which indicates that for all but four of the students there was a demonstrated increase in scores for question six, including two students that scored a zero on both the pre- and the post-test. Thus, a majority of the students showed improvement in their understanding of a well-developed character in a short story.

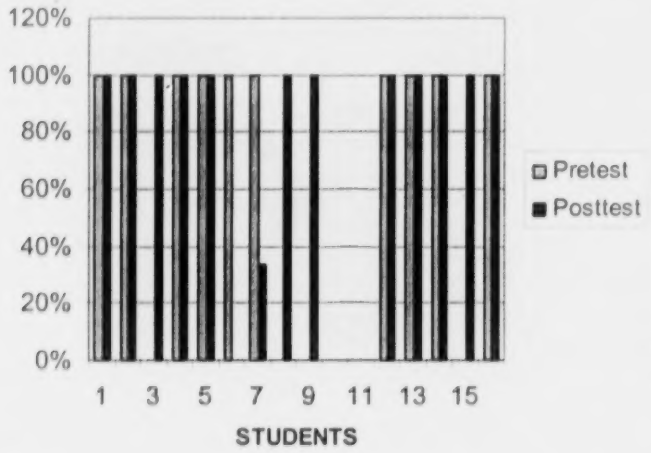


***Figure 2: Individual student percentile scores for question six.***

The standard deviation for question six also decreased in size by 8% from 50% in the pre-test to 42% in the post-. The range for this question stayed the same in both the pre- and the post-test (Table 7). This illustrated that enough students scored better on the test to change the standard deviation without a change in the range of the scores.

***Table 7: Standard deviation and range for question six.***

| | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Standard Deviation | 50% | 42% | -8% |
| Range | 100% | 100% | 0% |

The results of the story element test were also examined statistically as a whole. The class average for the pre-test was 58%. The scores for the post-test increased by 15% for an average on the post-test of 73% (Table 8).

***Table 8: Average scores for the post- and pre-test for all questions.***

| | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Mean of all questions | 58% | 73% | +15% |

In addition, all but three of the students' scores increased from the pre- to the post-test. (Figure 3) Consequently, the majority of students demonstrated improvements in their understanding of a short story as a whole.

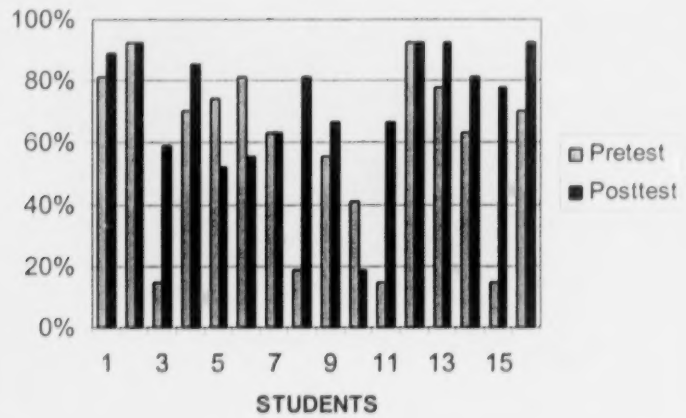


***Figure 3: Individual percentile for all questions.***

The standard deviation for the total scores also decreased by 8% from 28% in the pre- to 20% in the post-. The range of the scores also decreased by 4% from 78% to 74% (Table 9). Therefore, the students' scores were both better and closer in range after the tutoring experience.

***Table 9: Standard deviation and range for all questions.***

| | Pre-Test | Post-Test | Difference |
|---|---|---|---|
| Standard Deviation | 28% | 20% | -8% |
| Range | 78% | 74% | -4% |

Besides the short story test, the students were asked specifically to describe how confident they felt in their understanding of the short story elements before and after the short

story unit. In the first survey, eight students or 47% of those surveyed expressed that they did not feel confident in their understanding of the basic short story elements. For instance, one student responded that he was "Not very confident, all I know is paragraphs and that's it." Seven students, (41%) had the opposite answer and were confident in their understanding of the elements of a short story. One of those students responded, "I think that I know enough to be able to write a decent short story." The remaining three (18%) of the students, had a variety of responses to this question including "I really don't know the elements of a short story. I just write them."

At the end of the unit, the students were asked how they now felt about their understanding of the elements of a short story. In this survey 18 or 82% of the students expressed that they now felt confident in their understanding of the elements of a short story. One student even expressed that she was now "overly confident" in the elements of a short story. In addition to the significant increase in the feeling of confidence about the short story elements, there was a decrease in the number of students who were not confident from 41% to 0%. This means that at the end of this experience, all of the students were confident in their understanding of the studied and tutored elements of the short story.

*Ability*

Each short story that was turned in by the students was evaluated according to the class-developed rubrics that pertained to characters and plot development. The class average for their scores on plot development was 4.8 on a 5 point rubric scale (Table 2), which equals a percentage of 96. The scores on characterization were also high where the class average according to the class-developed rubric (Table 3) was 4.5 or 89% on the 5-point scale. The combined score for plot and characterization was a percentage of 93% (Table 10).

***Table 10: Average scores for individual short stories written by the creative writing student.***

| | *Plot* | *Character* | *Total* |
|---|---|---|---|
| ***Final Short Story*** | ***96%*** | ***89%*** | ***93%*** |

In addition, all of the students received a 5 in at least one of the focused areas of study (Figure 4). Combined with the data in the understanding section that illustrated an increased understanding of the elements of the short story this data illustrates that the students were able to apply their knowledge in the writing of their own short stories which indicates that the students were successful in their acquisition of this knowledge.

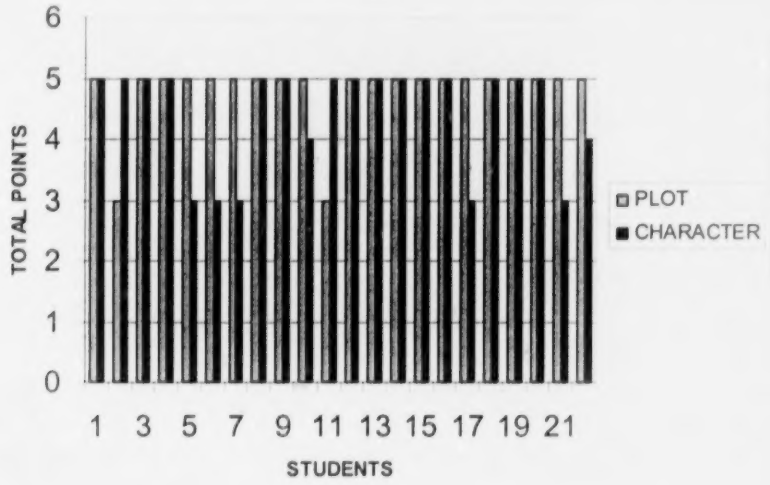


***Figure 4: Individual student scores for their plot and character in the short story.***

*Positive and negative effects of bringing two age groups together.*

The students were asked how they felt about tutoring the sixth graders before and after the event. In the initial survey, 35% of the students thought the experience would be fun. Other students (24%) were unsure about the experience and their abilities, including one student who remarked that he was "nervous because I don't want to teach them wrong." The remaining students had a variety of answers including one who said, "I really don't care."

In the post-survey there was a change in the responses that the students gave in relation to working with the sixth graders. The majority of the responses were positive in nature, with 23%

stating that it was fun and they "like working with kids." Another 23% said that the experience was O.K. and one student added, "The stories weren't as bad as I though they would have been." Along with the students that thought the experience was positive, there was also a significant number of students (31%) who responded to the survey that disliked working with the sixth graders, and one commented that if he had a choice he would have chosen not to work with them. Another response that emerged frequently 18% of the time in combination with other responses was of frustration about working with the sixth graders and trying to get the students to understand what they were trying to teach them. For instance, one student said that the experience was "fun at times but frustrating when they wouldn't listen." Therefore, according to these responses in comparison to the first survey, this may have not been a positive or enjoyed experience socially by the high school students.

*Collaboration*

A project such as this took a significant amount of planning time on the part of both of the instructors. The two primary instructors, Connie Hampton and Denise Ankcorn, spent approximately thirty hours in planning and preparation outside of school. In addition, during the trading of drafts (since access to e-mail was not available at both of the schools) the stories were hand delivered between the two classes resulting in more time required by the instructors. Although this did allow for the comments to be more personal on the part of the high schoolers, it increased the amount of time between the exchanging of drafts because the instructors tried to have all of the drafts before hand delivering them to the other school. Needless to say, a project such as this takes a considerable amount of planning and organization for it to be successful.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study testify that there was an increase in the students' understanding and ability to use the short story elements of characterization and plot after the cross-age tutoring experience. The increase in understanding and confidence in their knowledge of these elements were supported through both the short story test and the survey. In the short story test, there was an average 15% increase in scores in all of the tested areas. The confidence in the students' knowledge of characterization and plot increased by 41% when none of the students answered that they were unsure of their knowledge in the post-survey. The students' ability to use the knowledge that they had gained about the short story elements was illustrated through all of the instruments, the most significant being the scores on the short stories the students wrote on their own. All of the students that turned in a short story scored the maximum score of a five on at least one of the evaluated areas. This shows that the students were able to use the knowledge that they had to tutor on in their own writing. These findings are consistent with the research on cross-age tutoring that has found that the tutors often show increases in ability both academically and socially.

The increase in academic and social abilities through tutoring, in both past studies and this study, has been attributed to several different causes. One of the main causes is that tutoring allows for a shift in the locus of control over information. Through the tutoring experience, the tutor has an increased control over the knowledge because they are now responsible for the dissemination of the knowledge to their tutee. For instance in this experience, the students expressed a significant amount of concern about making sure that they understood what they were trying to teach. In the initial survey, 24% of the students responded that they were unsure about tutoring the sixth graders because they were unsure of their knowledge of the specific story

writing elements. This uncertainty resulted in an increased need to make sure that they knew what they were talking about, which resulted in an increase in the studying of the information and attention to the details of what they were teaching. Finally, the result of this preparation was that all of the students indicated on the post-survey that they were now confident in their knowledge of the examined story elements.

Socially, there was a shift in the locus of control because the role of a cross-age tutor was essentially that of a teacher. During the tutoring experience the high school students were often commenting that "this must be what it is like to be a teacher." For instance, several students discovered that one of the joys and problems of being a teacher is that you are working with students who have independent minds that sometimes do not listen or follow the instructor's suggestions. The authentic teaching situation that was created for the high schoolers created an opportunity for the students to experience some of frustrations of teaching. Thus, the students in this experience learned how to work through their frustrations and be an understanding and patient role model for their tutees. Therefore, the social benefit of this cross-age tutoring experience was an increased empathy and a new perspective about the role of teacher.

The academic abilities of the students were also altered metacognitively through this experience. Metacognition is a person thinking about his or her own thinking and processing. In tutoring it is found that "tutor's becomes self conscious about their strategies and objectives" because of the metacognitive task demands of tutoring and the personal accountability to the tutor (Flavell, 1976, p.235). To illustrate, in order for the high school students to be able to comment to the sixth graders, they had to not only read the story but also they had to think about the type of comments they would make so the tutee would understand and be encouraged. To facilitate this, before each draft was handed out, the class participated in a metacognitive activity

where they were told to put themselves in the role of a sixth grader and think about comments that would be both beneficial and supportive to them. The end results of this metacognitive analysis were the two rubrics on characterization and plot (Tables 2 & 3) that were written by the class and a list of positive comments to be used by the tutor on the sixth graders' drafts.

The metacognitive gains that the students made in the experience were not only observed in class by the researcher but were also demonstrated in students' ability to write their own short story. For example, before the experience the students at the high school level, knowing that they would be required to write a short story, were constantly asking about how to build a short story. Once the tutoring began and the high schoolers were helping their tutees with their stories, the questions about how to write their stories disappeared and more focused questions such as "How do I punctuate dialogue?" emerged. At the end of the tutoring experience, the only specific criteria that the students were given for their stories were the two class created rubrics on characters and plot along with a series of due dates for drafts. With all of the uncertainty at the beginning, at the completion of the unit a majority of the students were able to turn in a short story that demonstrated their academic knowledge of at least one of the focused areas of the elements of short story, characterization and plot.

Limitations

One major limitation of this study was the age demographics of the class. The class was comprised of mostly seniors and it was difficult to keep them focused on tutoring and their own work while competing with the activities and excitement of graduation.

Another limitation of the study was time. Since the stories had to be hand delivered between the two schools, this increased the length of time between the drafts, which often resulted in a decreased interest on the part of the high schooler that was thinking about

graduation. Time was also a consideration for the researchers. This project took a significant amount of out of class time for it to work.

Conclusions

This experience proved to be beneficial to the tutors because of the gains that occurred both academically and socially through the cross-age tutoring experience. This experience is an effective, although time consuming, method of teaching the short story elements to students at the high school level. One of the most important gains of this experience, that can not be replicated in a non-tutoring teaching of the short story elements, was the increase made socially by the high school students. In this experience the students had a chance to become a sixth grader in their mind again and learn about how to interact positively with those in this age group. Therefore, the tutoring experience provided an opportunity for the students to practice "the skills necessary to meet the challenges of working with others in different capacities" (Hickey & Decoste, 1998, p.75). Being able to work with others and be a positive influence is an important life long skill for the high schooler to take with them after graduation.

Recommendations for further study

The semester before the study the two researchers did a modified trial run of the experience, which provided invaluable logistical information for the researchers. For example, in the trial experience the researchers learned how long it would take to get between the two schools the cost of serving lunch, and how to match up the two schedules. Therefore, the researcher recommends that in additional studies a trial run is necessary to figure out the logistical concerns, unless of course the two age groups happen to be at the same school.

The researcher also recommends that it might be interesting to do this same study with two different lower age groups. It might be interesting to pair up a class comprised of mostly

$10^{th}$ graders with $4^{th}$ graders. A change in age would assist in the avoidance of the distraction created by the seniors' impending graduation and the sixth graders' advancement into middle school.

Finally, in the interest of decreasing the time of the study while increasing the frequency of the drafts, the researcher recommends that the exchange of drafts be done through electronic mail or the World Wide Web, one condition being that the instructor still does sensitivity checks on the comments of the drafts.

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## APPENDIXES


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## Appendix A. Open-ended survey

Class Survey

1. Why did you choose this class?

2. What function does writing serve in your life?

3. Do you enjoy writing? What do you enjoy about writing?

4. Have you written any short stories before?

5. How confident do you feel about understanding of the elements of a short story?

6. How do you feel about tutoring 6th graders?

## Appendix B. Test of short story elements

Short Story Elements Test of Basic Skills

Please answer the following questions about the story "The Cask of the Amontillado".

1. What is the exposition?

2. What event is the narrative hook?

3. What complications form the rising action?

4. What event is the climax?

5. Does the resolution logically follow the conflict and climax?

6. What does the author directly tell about the characters? What does the author indirectly show through their words and actions?

7. What details are used to describe the setting? What atmosphere is created by these details?

8. Is the theme, or central idea, directly stated? If the theme is not directly stated, what theme is implied by the story's other elements?

9. Identify what you believe to be the theme of the story.

(Appreciating Literature p. 175)

## Appendix C. "The Cask of the Amontillado" by Edgar Allen Poe

**The Cask of Amontillado**[1]
**by Edgar Allan Poe (1846)**

THE thousand injuries of Fortunato I had borne as I best could, but when he ventured upon insult I vowed revenge. You, who so well know the nature of my soul, will not suppose, however, that gave utterance to a threat. At length I would be avenged; this was a point definitely, settled --but the very definitiveness with which it was resolved precluded the idea of risk. I must not only punish but punish with impunity. A wrong is unredressed when retribution overtakes its redresser. It is equally unredressed when the avenger fails to make himself felt as such to him who has done the wrong.

It must be understood that neither by word nor deed had I given Fortunato cause to doubt my good will. I continued, as was my in to smile in his face, and he did not perceive that my to smile now was at the thought of his immolation[2].

He had a weak point --this Fortunato --although in other regards he was a man to be respected and even feared. He prided himself on his connoisseurship in wine. Few Italians have the true virtuoso spirit[3]. For the most part their enthusiasm is adopted to suit the time an opportunity, to practise imposture[4] upon the British and Austrian millionaires. In painting and gemmary[5], Fortunato, like his countrymen, was a quack, but in the matter of old wines he was sincere. In this respect I did not differ from him materially; --I was skillful in the Italian vintages myself, and bought largely whenever I could.

It was about dusk, one evening during the supreme madness of the carnival season[6], that I encountered my friend. He accosted me with excessive warmth, for he had been drinking much. The man wore motley[7]. He had on a tight-fitting parti-striped dress, and his head was surmounted by the conical cap and bells. I was so pleased to see him that I thought I should never have done wringing his hand.

I said to him --"My dear Fortunato, you are luckily met. How remarkably well you are looking to-day. But I have received a pipe[8] of what passes for Amontillado, and I have my doubts."

"How?" said he. "Amontillado, A pipe? Impossible! And in the middle of the carnival!"

"I have my doubts," I replied; "and I was silly enough to pay the full Amontillado price without consulting you in the matter. You were not to be found, and I was fearful of losing a bargain."

"Amontillado!"

"I have my doubts."

"Amontillado!"

"And I must satisfy them."

"Amontillado!"

---

[1] **Amontillado**: pale, dry Spanish sherry or wine, to which herbs and other ingredients are added.
[2] **immolation**: complete destruction.
[3] **virtuoso spirit**: great appreciation for the arts; here, the art of wine-tasting.
[4] **imposture**: deception
[5] **gemmary**: knowledge of jewels and stones.
[6] **carnival season**: colorful festival that precedes Lent, the six-week period of self-denial observed by many Christians.
[7] **motley**: multi-colored costume for a clown or jester.
[8] **pipe**: large barrel.

"As you are engaged, I am on my way to Luchresi. If any one has a critical turn it is he. He will tell me --"

"Luchresi cannot tell Amontillado from sherry[9]."

"And yet some fools will have it that his taste is a match for your own.

"Come, let us go."

"Whither?"

"To your vaults."

"My friend, no; I will not impose upon your good nature. I perceive you have an engagement. Luchresi--"

"I have no engagement; --come."

"My friend, no. It is not the engagement, but the severe cold with which I perceive you are afflicted. The vaults are insufferably damp. They are encrusted with niter[10]."

"Let us go, nevertheless. The cold is merely nothing. Amontillado! You have been imposed upon. And as for Luchresi, he cannot distinguish Sherry from Amontillado." Thus speaking, Fortunato possessed himself of my arm; and putting on a mask of black silk and drawing a roquelaire[11] closely about my person, I suffered him to hurry me to my palazzo[12].

There were no attendants at home; they had absconded to make merry in honour of the time. I had told them that I should not return until the morning, and had given them explicit insure their immediate disappearance, one and all, as soon as my back was turned.

I took from their sconces two flambeaux[13], and giving one to Fortunato, bowed him through several suites of rooms to the archway that led into the vaults. I passed down a long length to the foot of the descent, and stood together upon the damp ground of the catacombs[14] of the Montresors.

The gait of my friend was unsteady, and the bells upon his cap jingled as he strode.

"The pipe," he said.

"It is farther on," said I; "but observe the white web-work which gleams from these cavern walls."

He turned towards me, and looked into my eves with two filmy orbs that distilled the rheum of intoxication.

"Niter?" he asked, at length.

"Niter," I replied. "How long have you had that cough?"

"Ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh! --ugh! ugh! ugh!"

My poor friend found it impossible to reply for many minutes.

"It is nothing," he said, at last.

"Come," I said, with decision, "we will go back; your health is precious. You are rich, respected, admired, beloved; you are happy, as once I was. You are a man to be missed. For me it is no matter. We will go back; you will be ill, and I cannot be responsible. Besides, there is Luchresi --"

"Enough," he said; "the cough's a mere nothing; it will not kill me. I shall not die of a cough."

---

[9] **sherry**: here, a sweet sherry, unlike the dry Amontillado.

[10] **niter**: nitrate salt deposit

[11] **roquelaire**: knee-length cloak.

[12] **palazzo**: large home or palace.

[13] **from their . . . flambeaux**: from their holders two flaming torches.

[14] **catacombs**: underground cemetery made up of rooms and passages with recesses in the walls for tombs. Wine is kept here because of the low temperatures and the darkness.

"True --true," I replied; "and, indeed, I had no intention of alarming you unnecessarily -- but you should use all proper caution. A draught of this Medoc will defend us from the damps. Here I knocked off the neck of a bottle which I drew from a long row of its fellows that lay upon the mould.

"Drink," I said, presenting him the wine.

He raised it to his lips with a leer. He paused and nodded to me familiarly, while his bells jingled.

"I drink," he said, "to the buried that repose around us."

"And I to your long life."

He again took my arm, and we proceeded.

"These vaults," he said, "are extensive."

"The Montresors," I replied, "were a great and numerous family."

"I forget your arms[15]."

"A huge human foot d'or, in a field azure; the foot crushes a serpent rampant whose fangs are imbedded in the heel[16]."

"And the motto?"

"Nemo me impune lacessit[17]".

"Good!" he said.

The wine sparkled in his eyes and the bells jingled. My own fancy grew warm with the Medoc. We had passed through long walls of piled skeletons, with casks and puncheons[18] intermingling, into the inmost recesses of the catacombs. I paused again, and this time I made bold to seize Fortunato by an arm above the elbow.

"The niter!" I said; "see, it increases. It hangs like moss upon the vaults. We are below the river's bed. The drops of moisture trickle among the bones. Come, we will go back ere it is too late. Your cough --"

"It is nothing," he said; "let us go on. But first, another draught of the Medoc."

I broke and reached him a flagon of De Grave. He emptied it at a breath. His eyes flashed with a fierce light. He laughed and threw the bottle upwards with a gesticulation I did not understand.

I looked at him in surprise. He repeated the movement --a grotesque one.

"You do not comprehend?" he said.

"Not I," I replied.

"Then you are not of the brotherhood."

"How?"

"You are not of the masons[19]."

"Yes, yes," I said; "yes, yes."

"You? Impossible! A mason?"

"A mason," I replied.

"A sign," he said, "a sign."

"It is this," I answered, producing from beneath the folds of my roquelaire a trowel[20].

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[15] **arms**: coat-of-arms, a family emblem usually with symbolic pictures and a motto.

[16] **foot d'or . . . heel**: the Montresor emblem is a golden foot on a blue background. The foot is crushing a snake that is rising against it and biting the heel.

[17] **Nemo . . . lacessit**: Latin for "No one attacks me without being punished."

[18] **puncheons**: large wine barrels.

[19] **masons**: Freemasons, a secret fraternal order; also, another name for bricklayers.

[20] **trowel**: bricklayer's tool; also, a symbol of the Freemasons.

"You jest," he exclaimed, recoiling a few paces. "But let us proceed to the Amontillado."

"Be it so," I said, replacing the tool beneath the cloak and again offering him my arm. He leaned upon it heavily. We continued our route in search of the Amontillado. We passed through a range of low arches, descended, passed on, and descending again, arrived at a deep crypt, in which the foulness of the air caused our flambeaux rather to glow than flame.

At the most remote end of the crypt there appeared another less spacious. Its walls had been lined with human remains, piled to the vault overhead, in the fashion of the great catacombs of Paris. Three sides of this interior crypt were still ornamented in this manner. From the fourth side the bones had been thrown down, and lay promiscuously upon the earth, forming at one point a mound of some size. Within the wall thus exposed by the displacing of the bones, we perceived a still interior crypt or recess, in depth about four feet, in width three, in height six or seven. It seemed to have been constructed for no especial use within itself, but formed merely the interval between two of the colossal supports of the roof of the catacombs, and was backed by one of their circumscribing walls of solid granite.

It was in vain that Fortunato, uplifting his dull torch, endeavoured to pry into the depth of the recess. Its termination the feeble light did not enable us to see.

"Proceed," I said; "herein is the Amontillado. As for Luchresi --"

"He is an ignoramus," interrupted my friend, as he stepped unsteadily forward, while I followed immediately at his heels. In niche, and finding an instant he had reached the extremity of the niche, and finding his progress arrested by the rock, stood stupidly bewildered. A moment more and I had fettered him to the granite. In its surface were two iron staples, distant from each other about two feet, horizontally. From one of these depended a short chain, from the other a padlock. Throwing the links about his waist, it was but the work of a few seconds to secure it. He was too much astounded to resist. Withdrawing the key I stepped back from the recess.

"Pass your hand," I said, "over the wall; you cannot help feeling the niter. Indeed, it is very damp. Once more let me implore you to return. No? Then I must positively leave you. But I must first render you all the little attentions in my power."

"The Amontillado!" ejaculated my friend, not yet recovered from his astonishment.

"True," I replied; "the Amontillado."

As I said these words I busied myself among the pile of bones of which I have before spoken. Throwing them aside, I soon uncovered a quantity of building stone and mortar. With these materials and with the aid of my trowel, I began vigorously to wall up the entrance of the niche.

I had scarcely laid the first tier of the masonry when I discovered that the intoxication of Fortunato had in a great measure worn off. The earliest indication I had of this was a low

moaning cry from the depth of the recess. It was not the cry of a drunken man. There was then a long and obstinate silence. I laid the second tier, and the third, and the fourth; and then I heard the furious vibrations of the chain. The noise lasted for several minutes, during which, that I might hearken to it with the more satisfaction, I ceased my labours and sat down upon the bones. When at last the clanking subsided, I resumed the trowel, and finished without interruption the fifth, the sixth, and the seventh tier. The wall was now nearly upon a level with my breast. I again paused, and holding the flambeaux over the mason-work, threw a few feeble rays upon the figure within.

A succession of loud and shrill screams, bursting suddenly from the throat of the chained form, seemed to thrust me violently back. For a brief moment I hesitated, I trembled.

Unsheathing my rapier[21], I began to grope with it about the recess; but the thought of an instant reassured me. I placed my hand upon the solid fabric of the catacombs, and felt satisfied. I reapproached the wall; I replied to the yells of him who clamoured. I re-echoed-- aided, I surpassed them in volume and in strength. I did this, and the clamourer grew still.

It was now midnight, and my task was drawing to a close. I had completed the eighth, the ninth and the tenth tier. I had finished a portion of the last and the eleventh; there remained but a single stone to be fitted and plastered in. I struggled with its weight; I placed it partially in its destined position. But now there came from out the niche a low laugh that erected the hairs upon my head. It was succeeded by a sad voice, which I had difficulty in recognizing as that of the noble Fortunato. The voice said--

"Ha! ha! ha! --he! he! he! --a very good joke, indeed --an excellent jest. We will have many a rich laugh about it at the palazzo --he! he! he! --over our wine --he! he! he!"

"The Amontillado!" I said.

"He! he! he! --he! he! he! --yes, the Amontillado. But is it not getting late? Will not they be awaiting us at the palazzo, the Lady Fortunato and the rest? Let us be gone."

"Yes," I said, "let us be gone."

"For the love of God, Montresor!"

"Yes," I said, "for the love of God!"

But to these words I hearkened in vain for a reply. I grew impatient. I called aloud--

"Fortunato!"

No answer. I called again --

"Fortunato!"

No answer still. I thrust a torch through the remaining aperture and let it fall within. There came forth in return only a jingling of the bells. My heart grew sick; it was the dampness of the catacombs that made it so. I hastened to make an end of my labour. I forced the last stone into its position; I plastered it up. Against the new masonry I re-erected the old rampart of bones. For the half of a century no mortal has disturbed them. In pace requiescat[22]!

-The End-

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[21] **rapier**: double-edged sword.

[22] **In pace requiescat**: Latin for "Rest in peace."

## Appendix D. "Shaving" by Leslie Norris

**Shaving**
**By Leslie Norris**

Earlier, when Barry had left the house to go to the game, an overnight frost had still been thick on the roads, but the brisk April sun had soon dispersed it, and now he could feel the spring warmth on his back through the thick tweed of his coat. His left arm was beginning to stiffen up where he'd jarred it in a tackle, but it was nothing serious. He flexed his shoulders against the tightness of his jacket and was surprised again by the unexpected weight of his muscles, the thickening strength of his body. A few years back, he thought, he had been a small, unimportant boy, one of a swarming gang laughing and jostling to school, hardly aware that he possessed an identity. But time had transformed him. He walked solidly now, and often alone. He was tall, strongly made, his hands and feet were adult and heavy, the rooms in which all his life he'd moved had grown too small for him. Sometimes a devouring restlessness drove him from the house to walk long distances in the dark. He hardly understood how it had happened. Amused and quiet, he walked the High Street among the morning shoppers.

He saw Jackie Bevan across the road and remembered how, when they were both six years old, Jackie had swallowed a pin. The flustered teachers had clucked about Jackie as he stood there, bawling, cheeks awash with tears, his nose wet. But now Jackie was tall and suave, his thick, pale hair sleekly tailored, his gray suit enviable. He was talking to a girl as golden as a daffodil.

"Hey, hey!" called Jackie. "How's the athlete, how's Barry boy?"

He waved a graceful hand at Barry.

"Come and talk to Sue," he said.

Barry shifted his bag to his left hand and walked over, forming in his mind the answers he'd make to Jackie's questions.

"Did we win?" Jackie asked. "Was the old Barry Stanford magic in glittering evidence yet once more this morning? Were the invaders sent hunched and silent back to their hovels in the hills? What was the score? Give us an epic account, Barry, without modesty or delay. This is Sue, by the way".

"I've seen you about," the girl said.

"You could hardly miss him," said Jackie. "Four men, roped together, spent a week climbing him--they thought he was Everest[23]. He ought to carry a warning beacon, he's a danger to aircraft".

"Silly," said the girl, smiling at Jackie. "He's not much taller than you are".

She had a nice voice too.

"We won," Barry said. "Seventeen points to three, and it was a good game. The ground was hard, though".

He could think of nothing else to say.

"Let's all go for a frivolous cup of coffee," Jackie said. "Let's celebrate your safe return from the rough fields of victory. We could pour libations[24] all over the floor for you".

"I don't think so," Barry said. "Thanks, I'll go straight home".

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[23] **Everest**: Mount Everest, the highest mountain in the world, located in the Himalayan mountain range between Nepal and Tibet.

[24] **pour libations**: Jackie is referring to an ancient Greek ritual in which a victorious warrior poured wine onto the ground as an offering of thanks to the gods.

"Okay," said Jackie, rocking on his heels so that the sun could shine on his smile. "How's your father?"

"No better," Barry said. "He's not going to get better".

"Yes, well," said Jackie, serious and uncomfortable, "tell him my mother and father ask about him".

"I will," Barry promised. "He'll be pleased".

Barry dropped the bag in the front hall and moved into the room which had been the dining room until his father's illness. His father lay in the white bed, his long body gaunt, his still head scarcely denting the pillow. He seemed asleep, thin blue lids covering his eyes, but when Barry turned away he spoke.

"Hullo, Son," he said. "Did you win?"

His voice was a dry, light rustling, hardly louder than the breath which carried it. Its sound moved Barry to a compassion that almost unmanned him, but he stepped close to the bed and looked down at the dying man.

"Yes," he said. "We won fairly easily. It was a good game".

His father lay with his eyes closed, inert, his breath irregular and shallow.

"Did you score?" he asked.

"Twice," Barry said. "I had a try in each half".

He thought of the easy certainty with which he'd caught the ball before his second try; casually, almost arrogantly he had taken it on the tips of his fingers, on his full burst for the line, breaking the fullback's tackle. Nobody could have stopped him. But watching his father's weakness he felt humble and ashamed, as if the morning's game, its urgency and effort, was not worth talking about. His father's face, fine-skinned and pallid, carried a dark stubble of beard, almost a week's growth, and his obstinate, strong hair stuck out over his brow.

"Good," said his father, after a long pause. "I'm glad it was a good game".

Barry's mother bustled about the kitchen, a tempest of orderly energy.

"Your father's not well," she said. "He's down today, feels depressed. He's a particular man, your father. He feels dirty with all that beard on him".

Barry filled a glass with milk from the refrigerator. He was very thirsty.

"I'll shave him," he said.

His mother stopped, her head on one side.

"Do you think you can?" she asked. "He'd like it if you can".

"I can do it," Barry said.

He washed his hands as carefully as a surgeon. His father's razor was in a blue leather case, hinged at the broad edge and with one hinge broken. Barry unfastened the clasp and took out the razor. It had not been properly cleaned after its last use and lather had stiffened into hard yellow rectangles between the teeth of the guard. There were water-shaped rust stains, brown as chocolate, on the surface of the blade. Barry removed it, throwing it in the wastebin. He washed the razor until it glistened, and dried it on a soft towel, polishing the thin handle, rubbing its metal head to a glittering shine. He took a new blade from its waxed envelope, the paper clinging to the thin metal. The blade was smooth and flexible to the touch, the little angles of its cutting clearly defined. Barry slotted it into the grip of the razor, making it snug and tight in the head.

The shaving soap, hard, white, richly aromatic, was kept in a wooden bowl. Its scent was immediately evocative and Barry could almost see his father in the days of his health, standing before his mirror, thick white lather on his face and neck. As a little boy Barry had loved the

*generous perfume of the soap, had waited for his father to lift the razor to razor to his face, for* one careful stroke to take away the white suds in a clean revelation of the skin. Then his father would renew the lather with a few sweeps of his brush, one with an ivory handle and the bristles worn, which he still used.

His father's shaving mug was a thick cup, plain and serviceable. A gold line ran outside the rim of the cup, another inside, just below the lip. Its handle was large and sturdy, and the face of the mug carried a portrait of the young Queen Elizabeth II[25], circled by a wreath of leaves, oak perhaps, or laurel. A lion and unicorn[26] balanced precariously above her crowned head, and the Union Jack[27], the Royal Standard[28], and other flags were furled each side of the portrait. And beneath it all, in small black letters, ran the legend: "Coronation June 2nd 1953." The cup was much older than Barry. A pattern of faint translucent cracks, fine as a web, had worked itself haphazardly, invisibly almost, through the white glaze. Inside, on the bottom, a few dark bristles were lying, loose and dry. Barry shook them out, then held the cup in his hand, feeling its solidness. Then he washed it ferociously, until it was clinically clean.

Methodically he set everything on a tray, razor, soap, brush, towels. Testing the hot water with a finger, he filled the mug and put that, too, on the tray. His care was absorbed, ritualistic. Satisfied that his preparations were complete, he went downstairs, carrying the tray with one hand.

His father was waiting for him. Barry set the tray on a bedside table and bent over his father, sliding an arm under the man's thin shoulders, lifting him without effort so that he sat against the high pillows.

"By God, you're strong," his father said. He was breathless as if he'd been running.

"So are you," said Barry.

"I was," his father said. "I used to be strong once".

He sat exhausted against the pillows.

"We'll wait a bit," Barry said.

"You could have used your electric razor," his father said. "I expected that".

"You wouldn't like it," Barry said. "You'll get a closer shave this way".

He placed the large towel about his father's shoulders.

"Now," he said, smiling down.

The water was hot in the thick cup. Barry wet the brush and worked up a lather. Gently he built up a covering of soft foam on the man's chin, on his cheeks and his stark cheekbones.

"You're using a lot of soap," his father said.

"Not too much," Barry said. "You've got a lot of beard".

His father lay there quietly, his wasted arms at his sides.

"It's comforting," he said. "You'd be surprised how comforting it is".

Barry took up the razor, weighing it in his hand, rehearsing the angle at which he'd use it. He felt confident.

"If you have prayers to say. . ."he said.

"I've said a lot of prayers," his father answered.

Barry leaned over and placed the razor delicately against his father's face, setting the head accurately on the clean line near the ear where the long hair ended. He held the razor in the

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[25] Queen Elizabeth II (born 1926): Queen of Great Britain since 1953.

[26] **lion and unicorn**: These animals are shown on the Royal Arms, the emblem of the British monarchy.

[27] **Union Jack**: national flag of Great Britain.

[28] **Royal Standard**: flag of British royalty.

tips of his fingers and drew the blade sweetly through the lather. The new edge moved light as a touch over the hardness of the upper jaw and down to the angle of the chin, sliding away the bristles so easily that Barry could not feel their release. He sighed as he shook the razor in the hot water, washing away the soap.

"How's it going?" his father asked.

"No problem," Barry said. "You needn't worry".

It was as if he had never known what his father really looked like. He was discovering under his hands the clear bones of the face and head, they became sharp and recognizable under his fingers. When he moved his father's face a gentle inch to one side, he touched with his fingers the frail temples, the blue veins of his father's life. With infinite and meticulous care he took away the hair from his father's face.

"Now for you neck," he said. "We might as well do the job properly".

"You've got good hands," his father said. "You can trust those hands, they won't let you down".

Barry cradled his father's head in the crook of his left arm, so that the man could tilt back his head, exposing the throat. He brushed fresh lather under the chin and into the hollows alongside the stretched tendons. His father's throat was fleshless and vulnerable, his head was a hard weight on the boy's arm. Barry was filled with unreasoning protective love. He lifted the razor and began to shave.

"You don't have to worry," he said. "Not at all. Not about anything".

He held his father in the bend of his strong arm and they looked at each other. Their heads were very close.

"How old are you?" his father said.

"Seventeen," Barry said. "near enough seventeen".

"You're young," his father said, to have this happen".

"Not too young," Barry said. "I'm bigger than most men".

"I think you are," his father said.

He leaned his head tiredly against the boy's shoulder. He was without strength, his face was cold and smooth. He had let go all of his authority, handed it over. He lay back on his pillow, knowing his weakness and his mortality, and looked at his son with wonder, with a curious humble pride.

"I won't worry then," he said. "About anything".

"There's no need," Barry said. "Why should you worry?"

He wiped his father's face clean of all soap with a damp towel. The smell of illness was everywhere, overpowering even the perfumed lather. Barry settled his father down and took away the shaving tools, putting them by with the same ceremonial precision with which he'd prepared them: the cleaned and glittering razor in its broken case; the soap, its bowl wiped and dried, on the shelf between the brush and the coronation mug; all free of taint. He washed his hands and scrubbed his nails. His hands were firm and broad, pink after their scrubbing. The fingers were short and strong, the little fingers slightly crooked, and the soft dark hair grew on the backs of his hands and his fingers just above the knuckles. Not long ago they had been small bare hands, not very long ago.

Barry opened wide the bathroom window. Already, although it was not yet two o'clock, the sun was retreating and people were moving briskly, wrapped in their heavy coats against the cold that was to come. But now the window was full in the beam of the dying sunlight, and

Barry stood there, illuminated in its golden warmth for a whole minute, knowing it would soon be gone.

## Appendix E. Guidelines for individual short stories

GUIDELINES AND TIME LINE FOR SHORT STORY ASSIGNMENT

TIME LINE

| ASSIGNMENT | DATE DUE | POINTS |
|---|---|---|
| First draft of Short Story | April 29 | 10 |
| Wise to revise (in class assignment) | April 29 | 5 |
| Readers workshop critique & participation in group. | May 4 | 15 |
| Second draft | May 5 | 10 |
| Final draft | May 14 | 30 |
| **Total points** | | **70** |

GRADING RUBRIC FOR FINAL DRAFT

Turned in and typed on the assigned due date 10 points
*10 points will be deducted from the score for each week the story is late.

In addition to turning your short story on time, your story will be evaluated according to the following rubrics that we developed in class.

**CHARACTERS**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10 points | Character is shown instead of told. Character is 3-dimensional and life-like. Character has motivation, problems and goals that are well developed. Has specific details such as an appropriate name. |
| 5 points | We are mostly told about the character instead of shown who the characters are. Motivation, problems and goals of the characters need more development. Few specific details about the character. |
| 1 point | Characters are not clearly defined. No personality to the character, not life-like. Hardly any details about the characters, or the details are inconsistent. Character is inconsistent and does not make sense. |

**PLOT**

| | |
|---|---|
| 10 points | The story is original and has a visible problem. Exposition of the story reveals the characters, setting and problem. Rising action prepares you for the climax by providing additional information and conflicts concerning the problem. The climax of the story is greatest moment of emotional intensity. The resolution gives the reader a solution to the problem. |
| 5 points | The problem of the story is unclear. The exposition of the story does not set up the story effectively. Resolution does not resolve the problem. |
| 1 point | No identifiable problem in the story which results in no plot in the story. The reader also does not learn about the characters and the setting. |

## Appendix F. Biography Sheet

Name_____

*Below draw a picture of yourself*

*Where were you born?*

*What are your favorite foods?*

*What is your favorite music?*

*What are your favorite activities? (hobbies, sports, games)*

*What would you do on a rainy Sunday afternoon?*

*If your house was burning down, what thing would you save?*

*Name a book that you have read over and over.*

*Describe your most awesome daydream.*

## Appendix G. Introduce your partner

# INTRODUCE A PARTNER

Your mission is to prepare and interesting and enlightening speech about another person in this room.

1. Prepare a set of at least five interview questions.

Some suggestions:

1. What is your name and nickname?
2. Do you have a pet? Tell me about it.
3. What is your favorite TV show/TV personality?
4. How long have you lived here? Where else have you lived?
5. How big is your family? Are you the only child? Middle? Youngest? Oldest?
6. What kind of sports do you like?
7. What is your favorite color?
8. What vegetable do you hate the most?
9. Who is your hero?
10. What would you do if you won $1,000,000,000
11. What is the funniest looking animal in your opinion?
12. Think of an interesting thought provoking question on your own!

2. Prepare your introduction speech.

The Requirements are:

- √ Include at least 3 INTERESTING TIDBITS about the person you are introducing.
- √ Write down your speech and show it to the person you are introducing to make sure you capture the essence of their personality.
- √ Practice the speech with your partner so you may speak with confidence.

The Third and final step is to deliver your speech to the audience. The set of partners will stand and introduce each other to the class in a strong and confidant manner.

## Appendix H. Short Story Planning Guide

# SHORT STORY PLANNING GUIDE

**NAMES:** _____

**TITLE:** _____

THEME: _____

_____

_____

**ORIENTATION:**

| CHARACTERS | SETTING (when? where? what? & why?) |
|---|---|
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |
| | |

**STEPS**

**INITIATING EVENT:**

What began the event? How did the characters get involved?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

COMPLICATION/S:

How the conflict/s or problem/s began.

RESOLUTION:

How the character/s solve the conflict/s or problem/s.